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TO : BELMONT, A. H.

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SUBJECTS :

IID, BURSTEN, LEONARD L., ASSOC, ALLEGED SCHEME, US,
EX-CUBAN DICTATOR BATISTA

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- 1 - Parsons
- 1 - DeL
- 1 - Ros
- 1 - Bei
- 1 - Don
- 1 - Liaison
- 1 - Cotter

A. H. Belmont

January 22, 1960

S. B. Donahoe

LEONARD L. BURSTEN, et al.
INTERNAL SECURITY - CUBA
BRIBERY

FRAUD AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 11-15-94 BY SP8 MAC/KSC
(JF-K)

Reference my memorandum 1/6/60 setting out highlights of this matter. In summary, allegation has been received from Miami source (Alfred Manheim, Miami arms dealer) concerning alleged scheme to secure entry into U. S. for ex-Cuban dictator Batista for sum of \$150,000 to be split between Congressman Abraham Multer of New York, Leonard Bursten, Miami Beach attorney, and two Batista adherents in Miami, Orlando Piedra and Eduardo Hernandez. Department has previously advised that this matter involves possible violations of various bribery statutes. State Department, which previously indicated its intention to discuss case with White House, advised on 1/6/60 that it will not issue visa to Batista in any case. Based on this advice, we instructed Miami on 1/7/60 to interview Bursten, Piedra, and Hernandez. We had previously been holding active investigation in abeyance pending some indication scheme was being put into effect.

By teletype 1/21/60 Miami has furnished following additional data received from Manheim, original source. On 1/5/60 Bursten told Manheim he would be attending cocktail party in Washington, D. C., with Congressman Multer on 1/5 or 6/60, no other details available. On 1/18/60 Hernandez advised source he had received reply from Batista to effect he appreciated offer but did not desire to testify before Congress at this time (scheme involved having Batista subpoenaed to appear before Congressional Committee). Source learned on 1/16/60 from another source that Hernandez and Piedra are now seeking to eliminate other intermediaries and obtain commission from Batista entirely for themselves. Manheim noted in this regard that Hernandez has recently become evasive with him.

Miami teletype 1/21/60 further noted that check of long-distance toll calls charged to Bursten's office shows he was in contact with Multer on four occasions in October and November, 1959; that he placed calls to Davidson, Washington, D. C., on numerous occasions between

Enclosure

405-63419

- 2-1423 (Davidson)

- 62-70441 (Batista)

- 1 - 67-65976 (Webb)
- 1 - 134-5296 (Manheim) 2-1423-

NOT RECORDED

176 JAN 27 1960

Memorandum Donahoe to Belmont
Re: LEONARD L. BURSTEN, et al.
105-83419

REVIEWED BY *USCS*
ON 7/23/97
 RELEASE IN FULL
 RELEASE IN PART
 TOTAL DENIAL

11/25 and 12/28/59; and that he placed numerous calls to Tom Webb of Washington, D. C., from 10/12 to 12/28/59. Davidson is apparently identical with Irving Davidson, registered Nicaraguan agent who has been mixed up with Latin-American and Cuban matters for some time and who is known to be a contact of former Special Agent Thomas D. Webb. Davidson has been interviewed by Bureau on a number of occasions and has volunteered information concerning Latin-American affairs. In fact, on 12/16/59 he advised WFO that he had heard talk of plan to get Batista into U. S. for a price by arranging for him to testify before Congressional Committee. He declined to furnish further details. Webb is apparently identical with former Special Agent Thomas Daugherty Webb, Jr., now vice president of Tecon Corporation owned by Clint Murchison, wealthy and prominent Texas oil man. Webb served as Bureau clerk from 1935 to 1939 and had two tours of duty as a Special Agent from 1939 to 1946 and from 1948 to 1952. His services were satisfactory and he left Bureau on very cordial terms. Miami has expressed belief interviews of Bursten, Piedra and Hernandez now will expose Manheim and destroy his future value. Miami recommends consideration be given to interviewing Webb.

OBSERVATIONS:

Manheim, former informant for U. S. Customs in Miami, has occasionally volunteered information to our Miami Office concerning Latin-American matters during recent years. However, he has never been considered informant or regular confidential source of Bureau and his reliability is considered doubtful. In view of serious allegations in this matter involving alleged bribe to a Congressman, in view of Department's opinion that this matter may involve violations of various bribery statutes and in view of possible White House interest, it is believed we should press to resolve this matter as soon as possible. It is not felt we should defer investigation simply on grounds of possible compromising of Manheim, who is not an established source, and especially since it appears interviews requested by Bureau could be conducted without jeopardizing Manheim. In latter connection, it is pointed out this scheme is known to a number of individuals and could have been reported to Bureau from any one of a dozen different sources. In view of Manheim's comments indicating Hernandez and Piedra are seeking to eliminate other intermediaries and indicating Hernandez may be withholding information from him, it is not likely we would ever resolve this situation if we were to rely entirely on information which may be received by Manheim.

It is felt we should immediately have Miami conduct interviews of Bursten, Piedra and Hernandez, as previously requested, and that

-1 - Parsons
-1 - DeLoach
-1 - Rosen
-1 - Belmont
-1 - Donahoe
-1 - Liaison
-1 - Cotter

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S. B. Donahoe

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(JFIC)

LEONARD L. BURSTEN, et al.
INTERNAL SECURITY - CUBA

BRIBERY

FRAUD AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

RELEASE IN PART
TOTAL DENIAL

RELEASE IN FULL

DO NOT RELEASE

Re my memorandum 1/6/60 setting out highlights in this case. Allegation was received from Alfred Manheim, Miami arms dealer, re alleged scheme to secure U. S. entry for ex-Cuban dictator Batista for sum of \$150,000 to be split between Congressman Multer of New York, Bursten, an attorney, and two Batista followers in Miami. Department has noted possible bribery violations. State Department, which planned to discuss matter with White House, advised 1/6/60 that Batista would not be issued visa and on 1/7/60 we instructed Miami to interview Bursten and two Batista followers in Miami, Orlando Piedra and Eduardo Hernandez.

Miami has now furnished additional information received from Manheim indicating Batista has turned down proposition and that Hernandez and Piedra may be seeking to eliminate others involved to obtain commission entirely for themselves. Miami inquiries have revealed Bursten has been in frequent touch with Irving Davidson, Nicaraguan agent, and former Special Agent (SA) Tom Webb, who is connected with Clint Murchison enterprise at Washington, D. C. Miami recommends against interviews of Bursten, Hernandez and Piedra on grounds of possibly jeopardizing Manheim.

Manheim has volunteered information to Miami concerning Cuban matters in past but has never been informant or regular source and his reliability has been doubtful. In view of serious charges involved, possible bribery violations pointed out by Department and possible White House interest, it is felt we should press to resolve matter as soon as possible. It is not believed we would jeopardize Manheim through interviews of others since this scheme is known to a number of individuals and could have been reported by various sources.

A detailed memorandum setting out facts in this matter is attached.

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Mohr

Parry
Belmont
Callahan

DeLoach

Malone

McGuire

Rosen

Felt

Trotter

W. Clegg

Trotter

Trotter

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Gandy

closure

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12-1423

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